

VERTIGO

The cover art depicts a chaotic scene. In the foreground, a man with wild, spiky hair and a menacing expression, wearing a dark trench coat, is shown from the chest up, holding a large, ornate silver key. He appears to be in the process of opening a large, thick book that is the central focus of the cover. The book's pages are thick and layered, with some showing intricate patterns. A glowing, ethereal light emanates from the book's pages. In the background, a small, white dog with a blue scarf around its neck is running towards the viewer with a look of alarm. The background is a dark, swirling space with a large, glowing ring of light, suggesting a fantastical or otherworldly setting. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, purples, and oranges, with bright highlights from the book's light and the ring of light.

F • A • B • L • E • S™

WILLINGHAM • BUCKINGHAM • PEPOY • LEIALOHA

126 Apr '13
suggested for
mature readers
vertigocomics.com

Fabletown by the Book

Chapter Two of Snow White

Bill Willingham: writer-creator
Mark Buckingham: pencils
Steve Leialoha and
Andrew Pepoy: inks
Lee Loughridge: colors
Todd Klein: letters
Gregory Lockard: asst. ed.
Shelly Bond: editor

At about the same time my mom was being surprised by that bad man in the new Fabletown, something else was taking shape in a different world that would turn out to have an impact on all our lives — perhaps mine most of all.

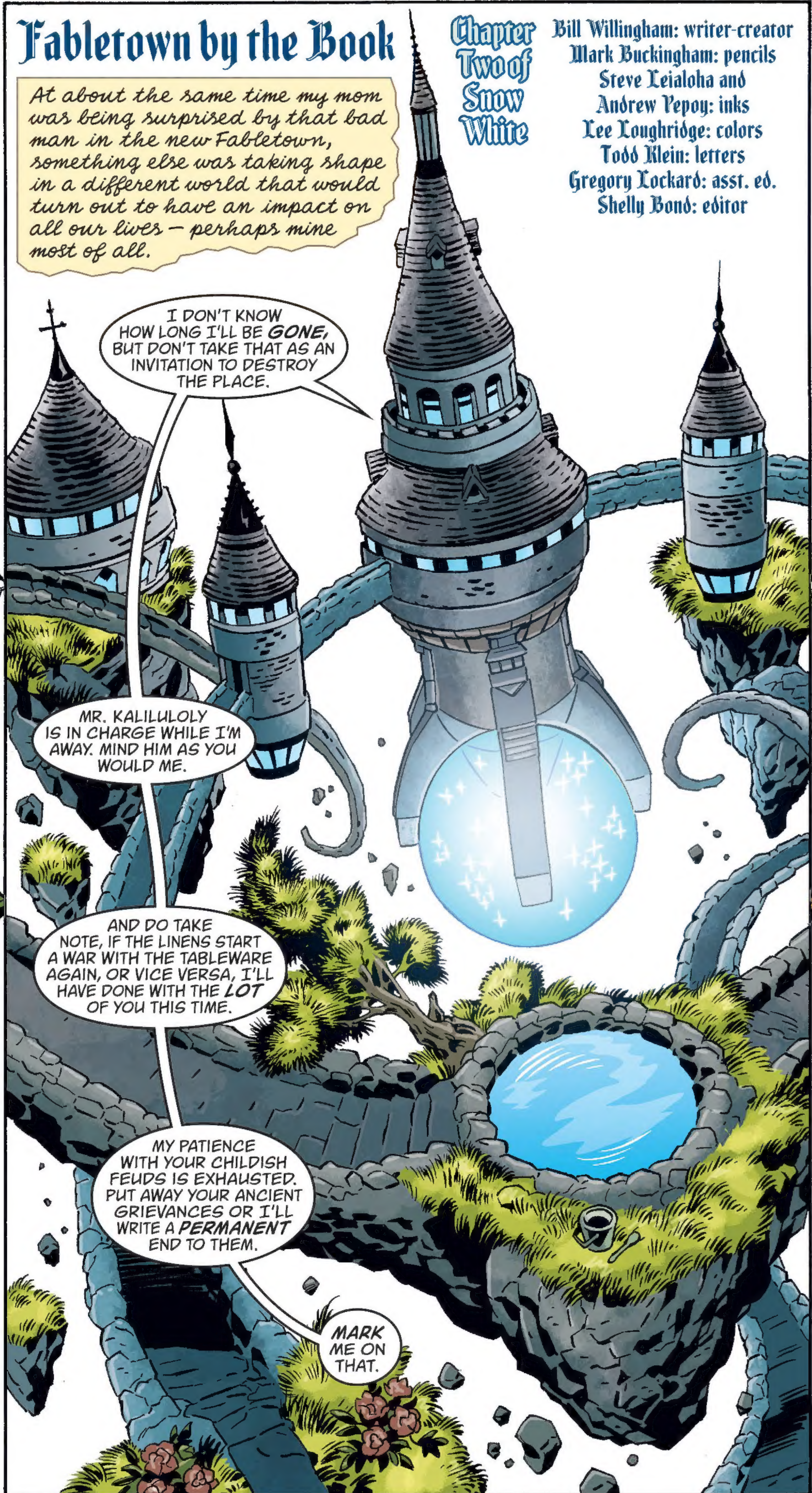
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'LL BE **GONE**, BUT DON'T TAKE THAT AS AN INVITATION TO DESTROY THE PLACE.

MR. KALILULOLY IS IN CHARGE WHILE I'M AWAY. MIND HIM AS YOU WOULD ME.

AND DO TAKE NOTE, IF THE LINENS START A WAR WITH THE TABLEWARE AGAIN, OR VICE VERSA, I'LL HAVE DONE WITH THE **LOT** OF YOU THIS TIME.

MY PATIENCE WITH YOUR CHILDISH FEUDS IS EXHAUSTED. PUT AWAY YOUR ANCIENT GRIEVANCES OR I'LL WRITE A **PERMANENT** END TO THEM.

MARK ME ON THAT.





AND BE NICE TO OUR GUEST.

WE WILL, MA'AM. **PROMISE** WE WILL.



SUCH A BOTHER, THESE TEDIUMS AND CHORES.



I FEEL TERRIBLE, DASHING TO RUN AN **ERRAND** AFTER YOU'VE ONLY JUST ARRIVED TO VISIT, MY SWEET, BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

YOU KNOW MORE THAN MOST, WE'RE ALL SLAVES TO THE CALENDAR.

PLEASE STAY. ENJOY THE HOSPITALITY OF MY AIRS AND MY **ACRES** WHILE I'M GONE, AND OH HOW WE'LL CATCH UP ON MY RETURN.



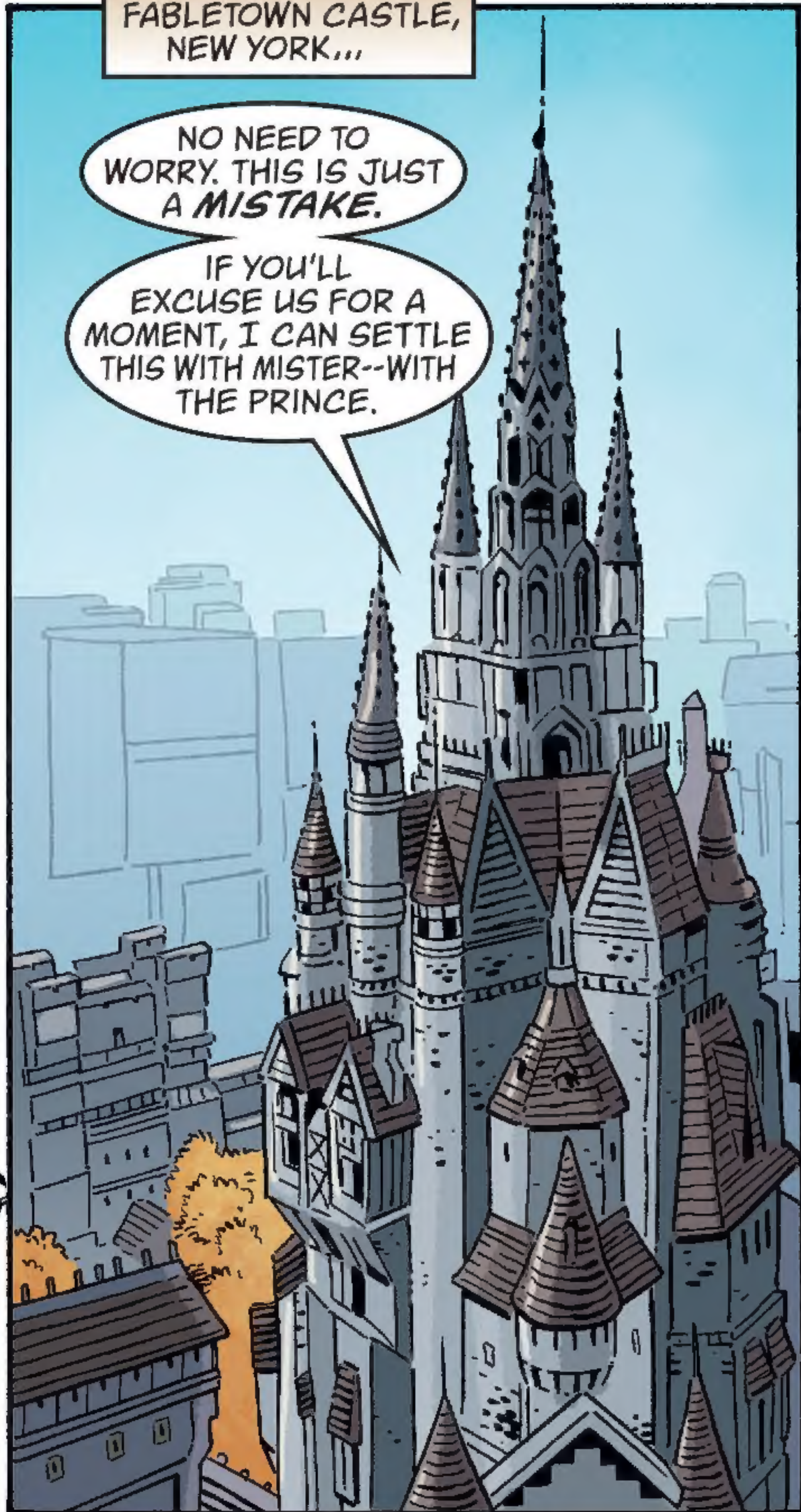
TUCK IN, SQUIRE WYRMHOUSE. LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF, AND **PLEASE** PROTECT THOSE WITHIN YOU.

YOUR WILL AND ONLY YOUR WILL, MADAM.

FABLETOWN CASTLE,
NEW YORK...

NO NEED TO WORRY. THIS IS JUST A *MISTAKE*.

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US FOR A MOMENT, I CAN SETTLE THIS WITH MISTER--WITH THE PRINCE.



ALONE AT LAST.

STOP IT.

PLEASE.



STOP WHAT, DEAR?

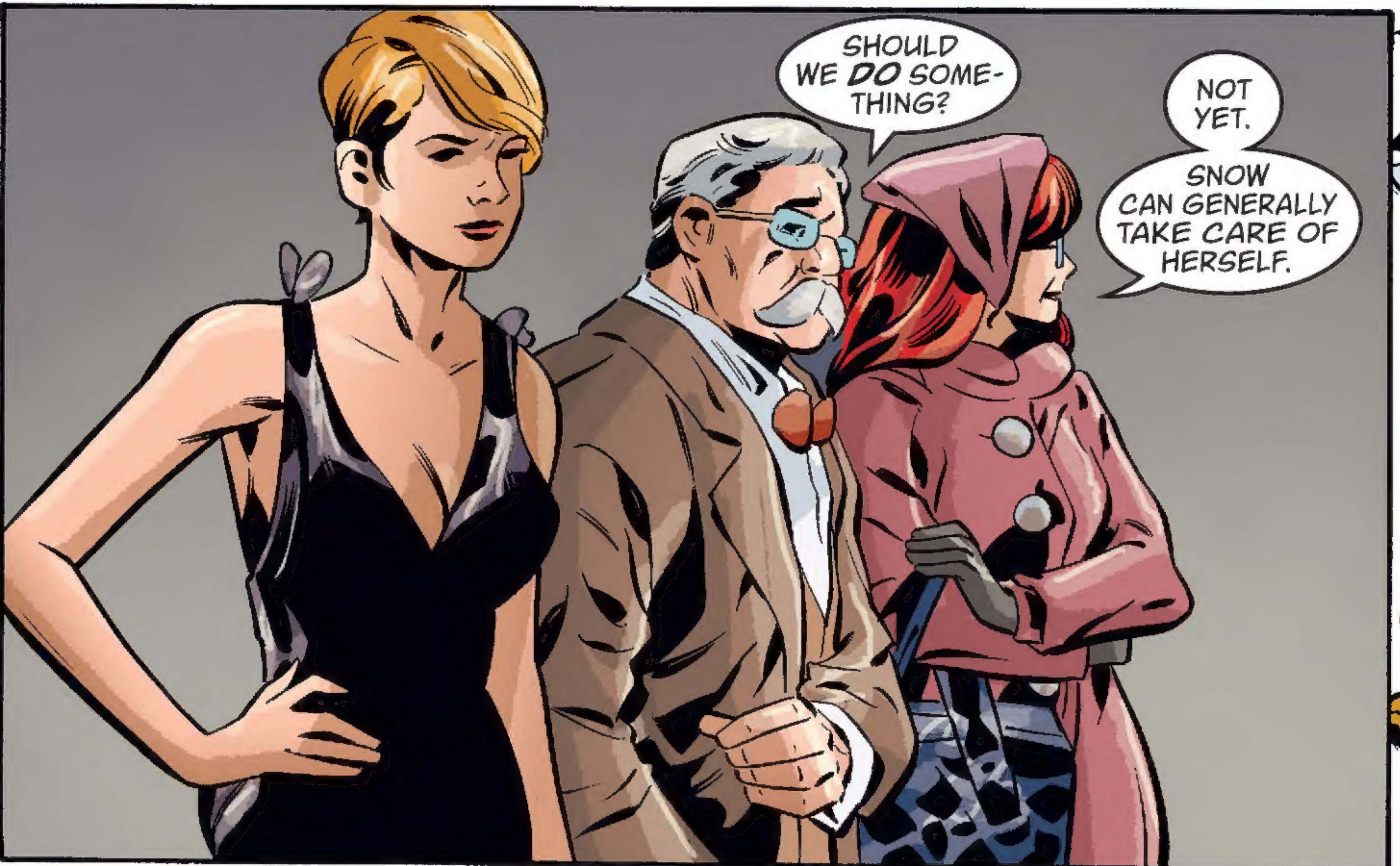
PAWING AT ME. AND DON'T CALL ME THAT. I NEED TO EXPLAIN SOMETHING--



A MAN CAN TOUCH HIS WIFE.

IT'S MY RIGHT.







STOP IT!

STOP THIS RIGHT NOW!



WHY?

RATHER I MEAN TO SAY, WHY SHOULD I?

I'VE BEEN WAITING *CENTURIES* TO TAKE A HUSBAND'S PRIVILEGES.



YOU'RE *NOT* MY HUSBAND!

OF COURSE I AM, SNOWFLAKE.



WE BETROTHED OURSELVES TO EACH OTHER LONG AGO.

I WAS A *CHILD!*

AND WE WERE *NEVER* MARRIED.



WE NEVER HAD THE *CEREMONY*, I'LL GRANT YOU THAT MUCH. YOU CAN HAVE THE WEDDING OF YOUR DREAMS, IF THAT'S YOUR HEART'S DESIRE.

BUT A CEREMONY IS MEANINGLESS IN THE HIGH LAW OF OUR LAND. THE *PROMISE* IS ALL THAT MATTERS.



THE VOW IS THE *DEED*, SNOW.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MUCH.

"ALL OF THE SORCERIES AT MY FATHER'S COMMAND COULDN'T UNDO THE SIMPLE AND INNOCENT WORDS WE SPOKE ON THAT FATEFUL DAY."

I WON'T HAVE IT!

I'VE MORTGAGED HALF MY KINGDOM TO KEEP US IN FAVOR WITH THE NEW EMPEROR--TO KEEP US IN POWER!

MARRY STRATEGICALLY NOW AND WE CAN RULE THIS ENTIRE WORLD.

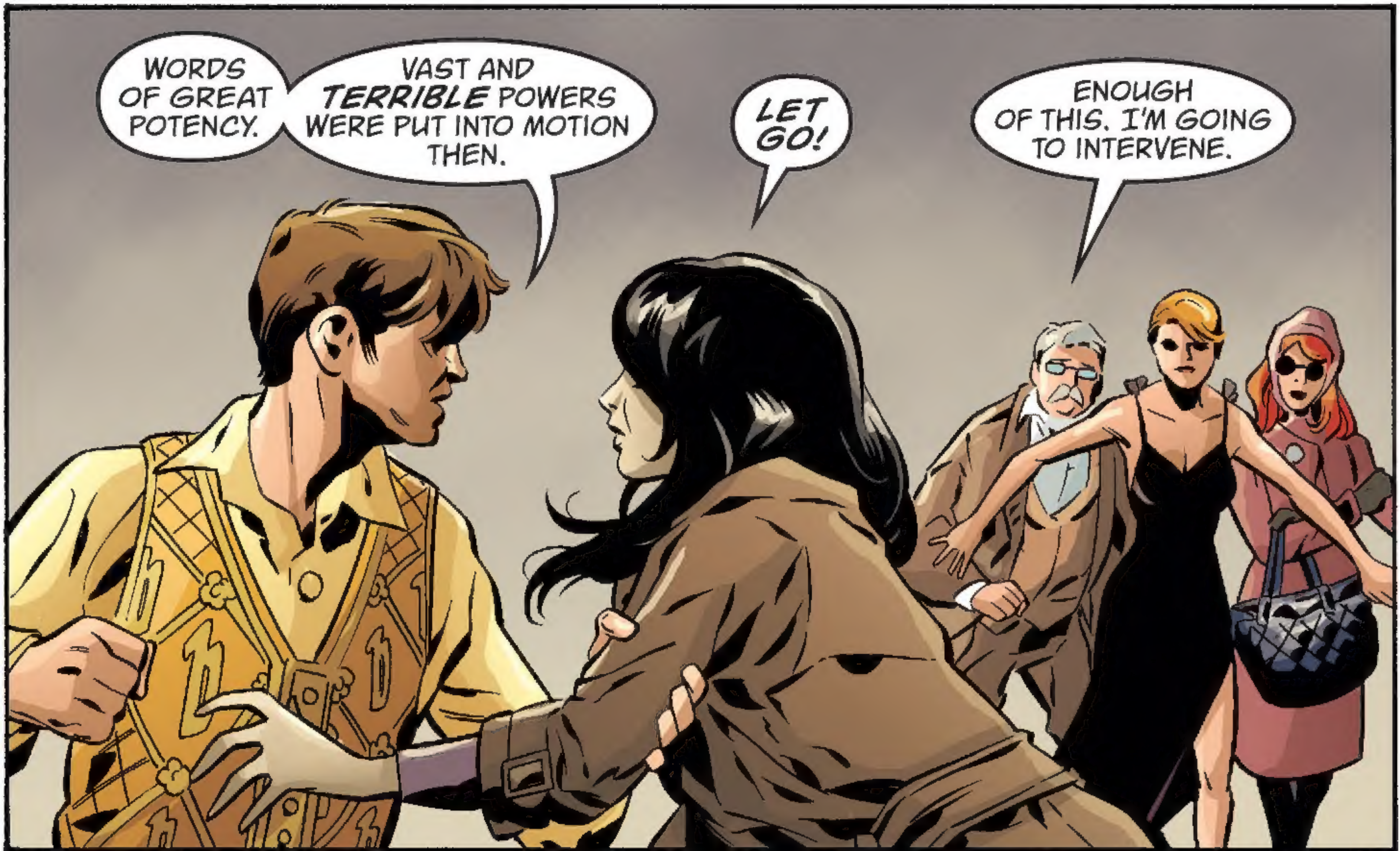
I WON'T HAVE YOU THROW AWAY ALL MY WORK BY MOONING OVER A RAGAMUFFIN FOREST GIRL WHO DIED DECADES AGO!

I DON'T BELIEVE SHE IS DEAD, FATHER. I'D FEEL IT IF SHE WERE.

THERE WAS POWER IN HER AND I MEAN TO HAVE IT.

I INTEND TO GIVE IT TO MY SONS.





WORDS OF GREAT POTENCY.

VAST AND TERRIBLE POWERS WERE PUT INTO MOTION THEN.

LET GO!

ENOUGH OF THIS. I'M GOING TO INTERVENE.



TRY AND HE'LL KILL YOU.

BEST LET THIS PLAY OUT.



YOU LET IT PLAY, LADY. I DON'T KNOW YOU AND I DON'T LET STRANGERS BOSS ME AROUND.

I'M STEPPING IN.

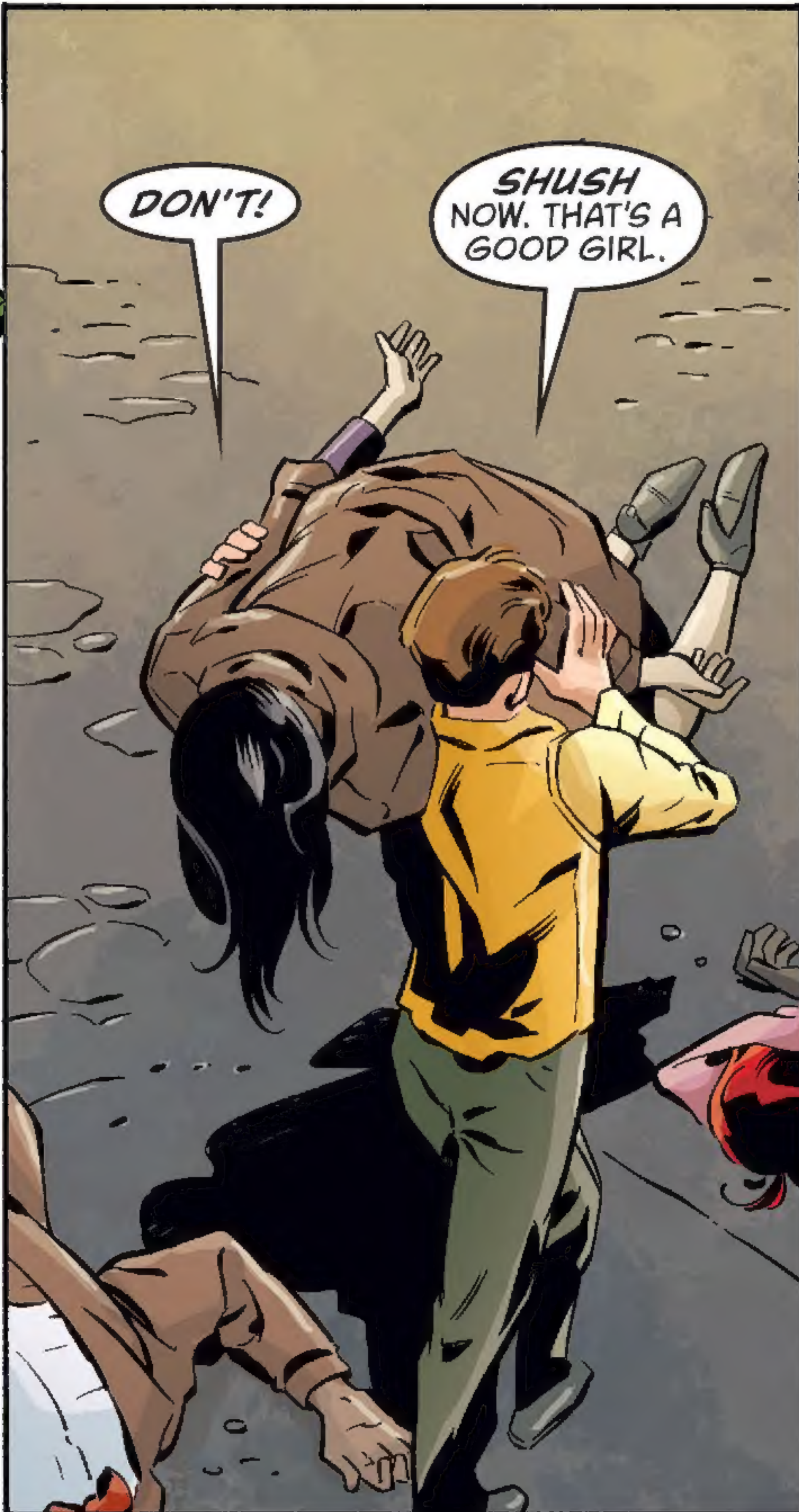


MISTER MAYOR?

RIGHT WITH YOU, BRIAR ROSE.



EXCUSE ME, MR. HOLT, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS!



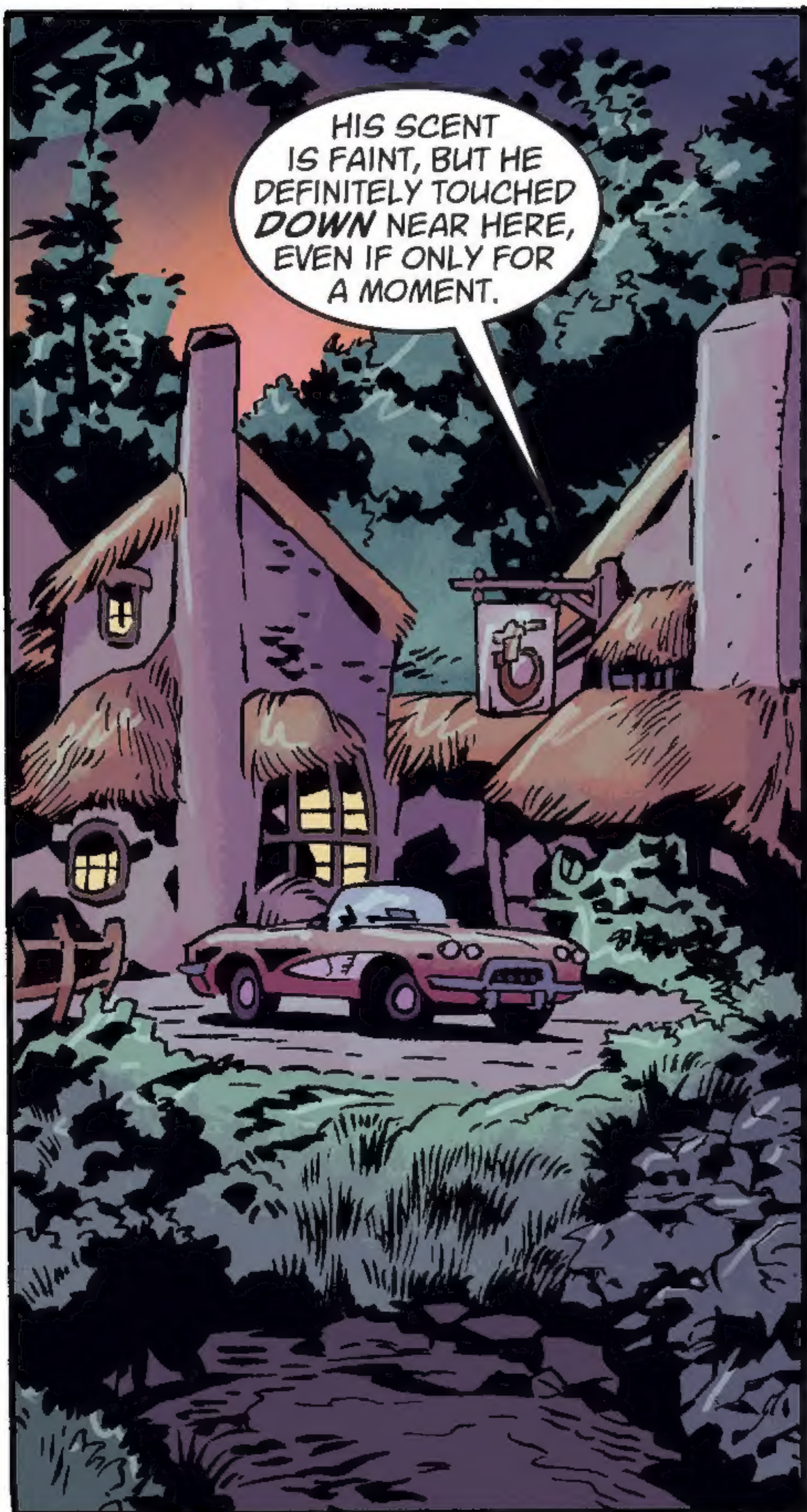


While my mother was getting into the biggest trouble of her life (if you don't count all the assassination attempts, invasions, personal betrayals and abandonments), my dad was much too far away to be of any help to her.

NO, MY DAUGHTER THERESE DIDN'T PASS THIS WAY, BUT I KNOW MY SON DARE DID.



HIS SCENT IS FAINT, BUT HE DEFINITELY TOUCHED DOWN NEAR HERE, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT.



PICTURE ME AS A CHILD.

SAME HAIR COLOR. MORE ROUNDED AND INNOCENT VERSIONS OF MY FEATURES.

NO ONE THAT LOOKED ANYTHING LIKE YOU PASSED THROUGH HERE, STRANGER. I'D SWEAR ON IT.

IF YOU GIVE YOUR HEART, LIFE AND GOOD WORKS TO BLUE, SOMEDAY HE'LL COME IN HIS POWER AND GLORY TO SMITE THE OVERLORDS AND SET YOU FREE.

WHAT OVERLORDS? WE'RE A REPRESENTATIVE LITOCRACY. PASS THE READING TEST, NO MATTER WHAT AGE, AND YOU CAN VOTE.





At that moment, or as close as I can pin the timeline down...

WAKE UP, ROBER.

ARE YOU OKAY?



NO, I AM DECIDEDLY NOT OKAY.

I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN WALLOPED BY A BEAR.

I TRIED TO WARN YOU.



HOW'S BRIAR?

I'LL LIVE, I GUESS.



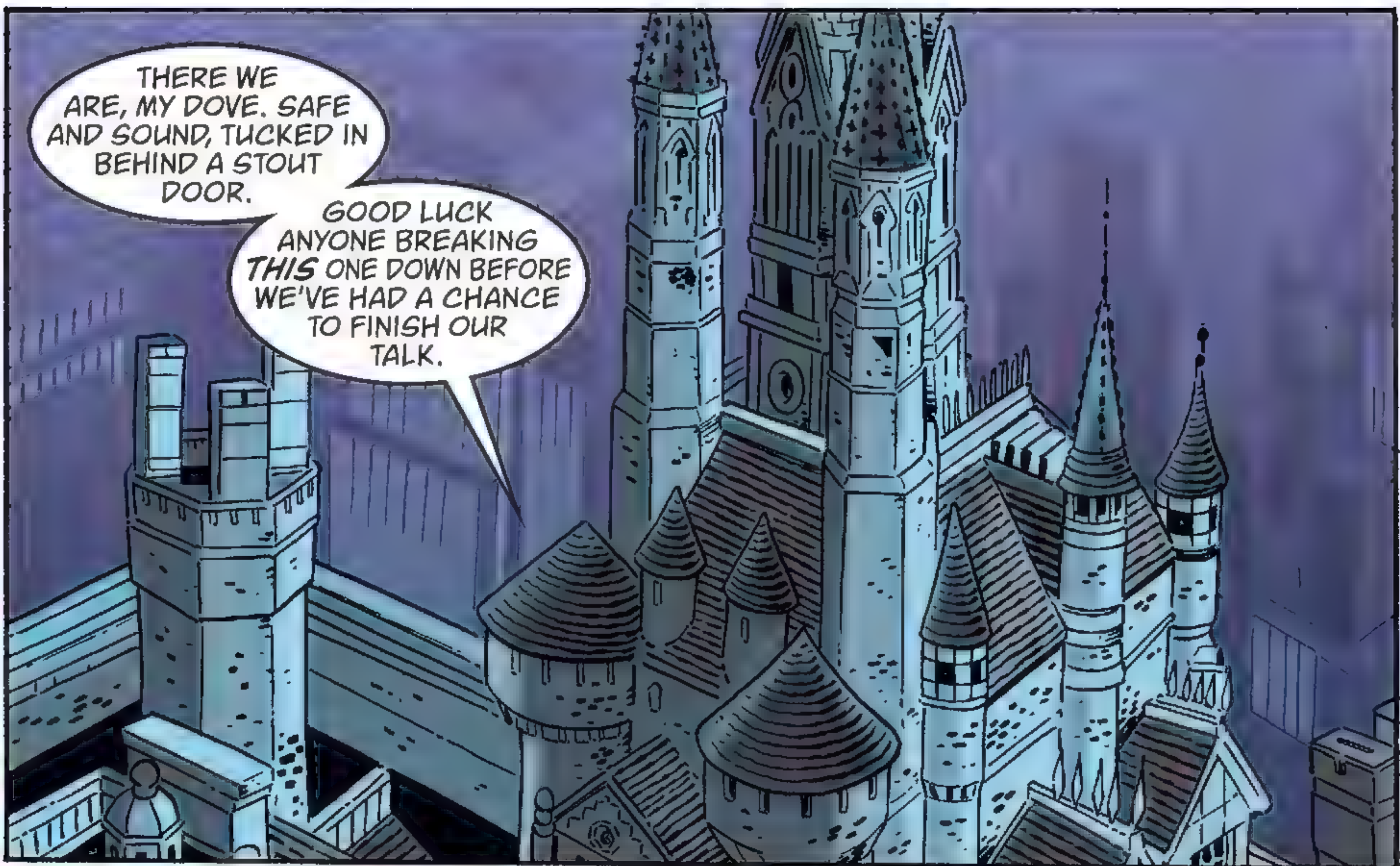
WHY DIDN'T YOU LEAVE HIM BE?

COULDN'T YOU SEE THE **POWER** HE HAD--THE IMMENSE MAGICAL ENERGIES CRACKLING AROUND HIM LIKE **FIRE**?



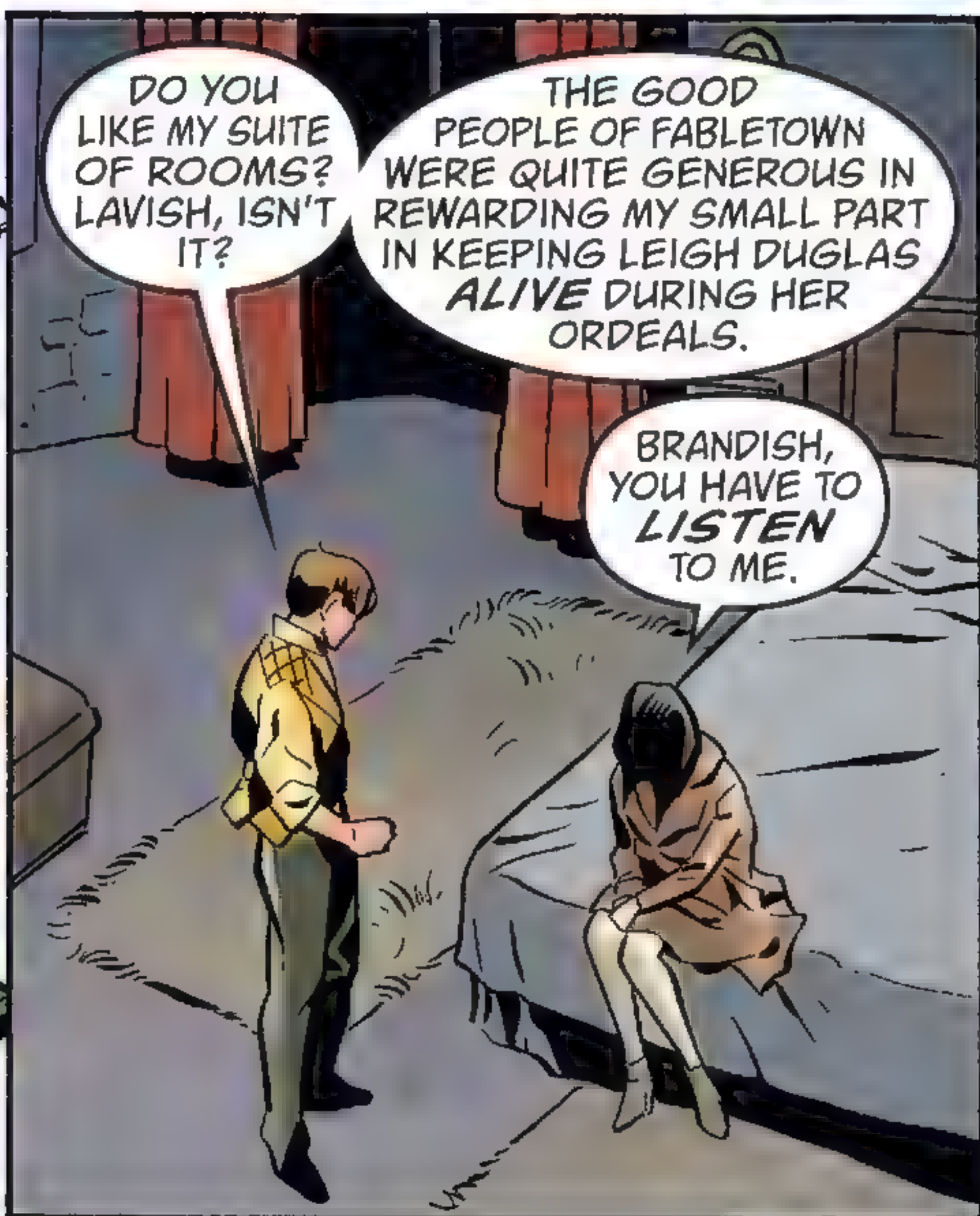
NO, I COULDN'T.

WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION, HOW CAN YOU SEE SUCH THINGS, MISS DUGLAS?



THERE WE ARE, MY DOVE. SAFE AND SOUND, TUCKED IN BEHIND A STOUT DOOR.

GOOD LUCK ANYONE BREAKING THIS ONE DOWN BEFORE WE'VE HAD A CHANCE TO FINISH OUR TALK.



DO YOU LIKE MY SUITE OF ROOMS? LAVISH, ISN'T IT?

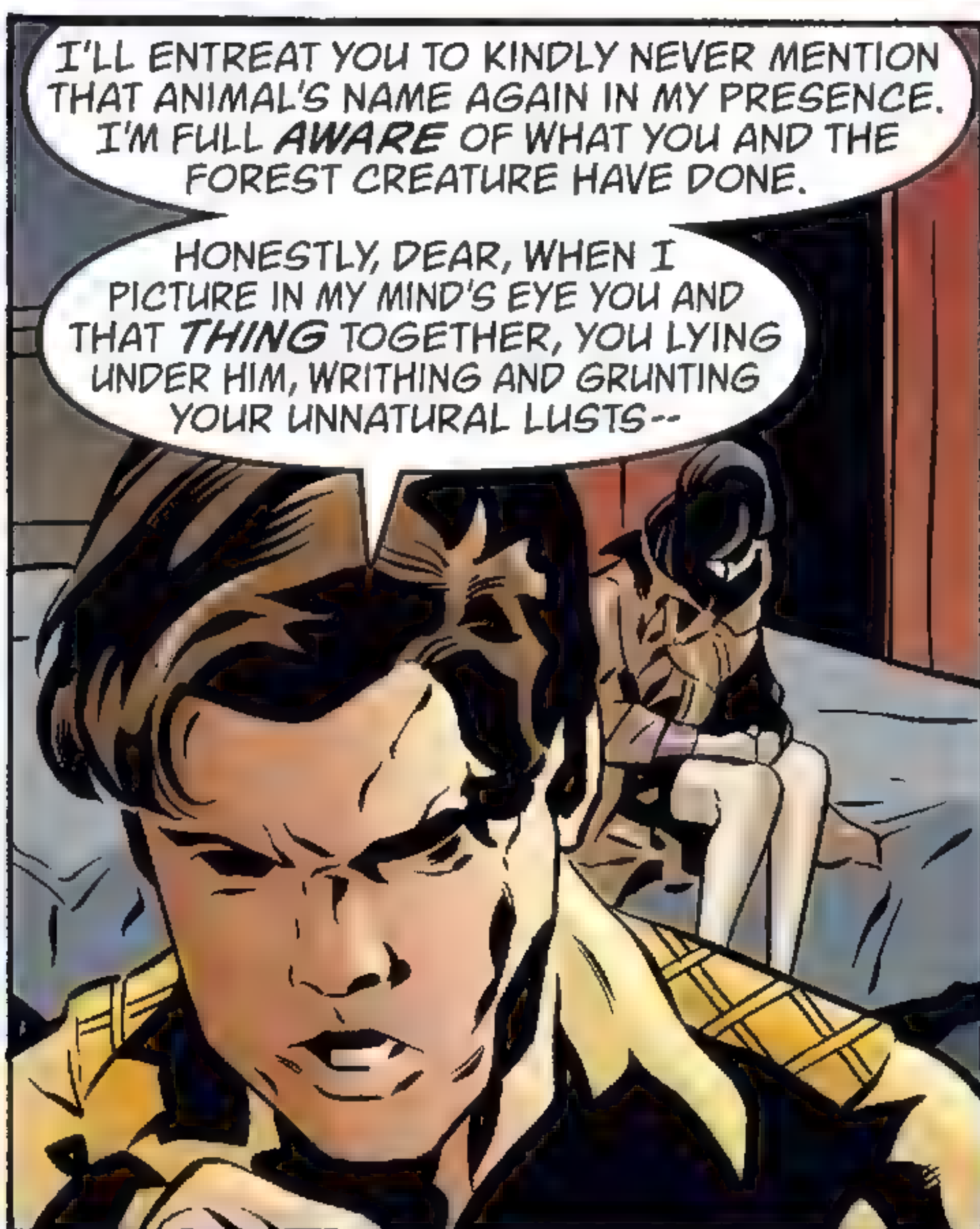
THE GOOD PEOPLE OF FABLETOWN WERE QUITE GENEROUS IN REWARDING MY SMALL PART IN KEEPING LEIGH DUGLAS ALIVE DURING HER ORDEALS.

BRANDISH, YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME.



OF COURSE I WILL, DARLING. A HUSBAND AND WIFE NEED TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER-- TO RELY CHIEFLY ON EACH OTHER.

WE'RE NOT MARRIED. WE CAN'T BE. I'M ALREADY MARRIED TO BIGBY WOLF.



I'LL ENTREAT YOU TO KINDLY NEVER MENTION THAT ANIMAL'S NAME AGAIN IN MY PRESENCE. I'M FULL AWARE OF WHAT YOU AND THE FOREST CREATURE HAVE DONE.

HONESTLY, DEAR, WHEN I PICTURE IN MY MIND'S EYE YOU AND THAT THING TOGETHER, YOU LYING UNDER HIM, WRITHING AND GRUNTING YOUR UNNATURAL LUSTS--



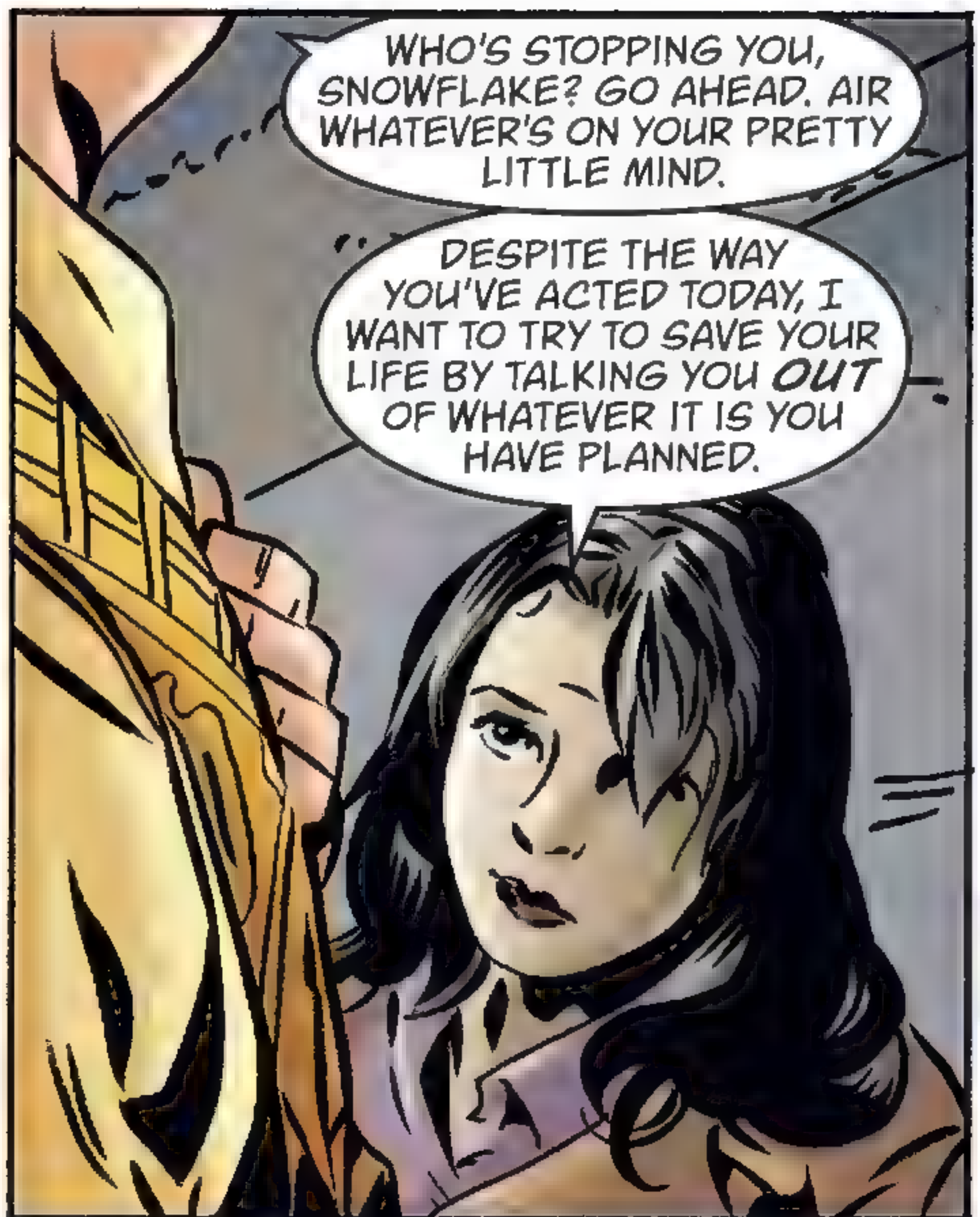
WELL, IT'S ENOUGH TO TEMPT A GENTLEMAN TO ACT ALARMINGLY UN-GENTLY INDEED.

BUT I'M RESOLVED TO FORGIVE YOU YOUR WILD AND WICKED WAYS. WHAT EVILS YOU GOT UP TO, LACKING MY SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE, ARE A THING OF THE PAST.



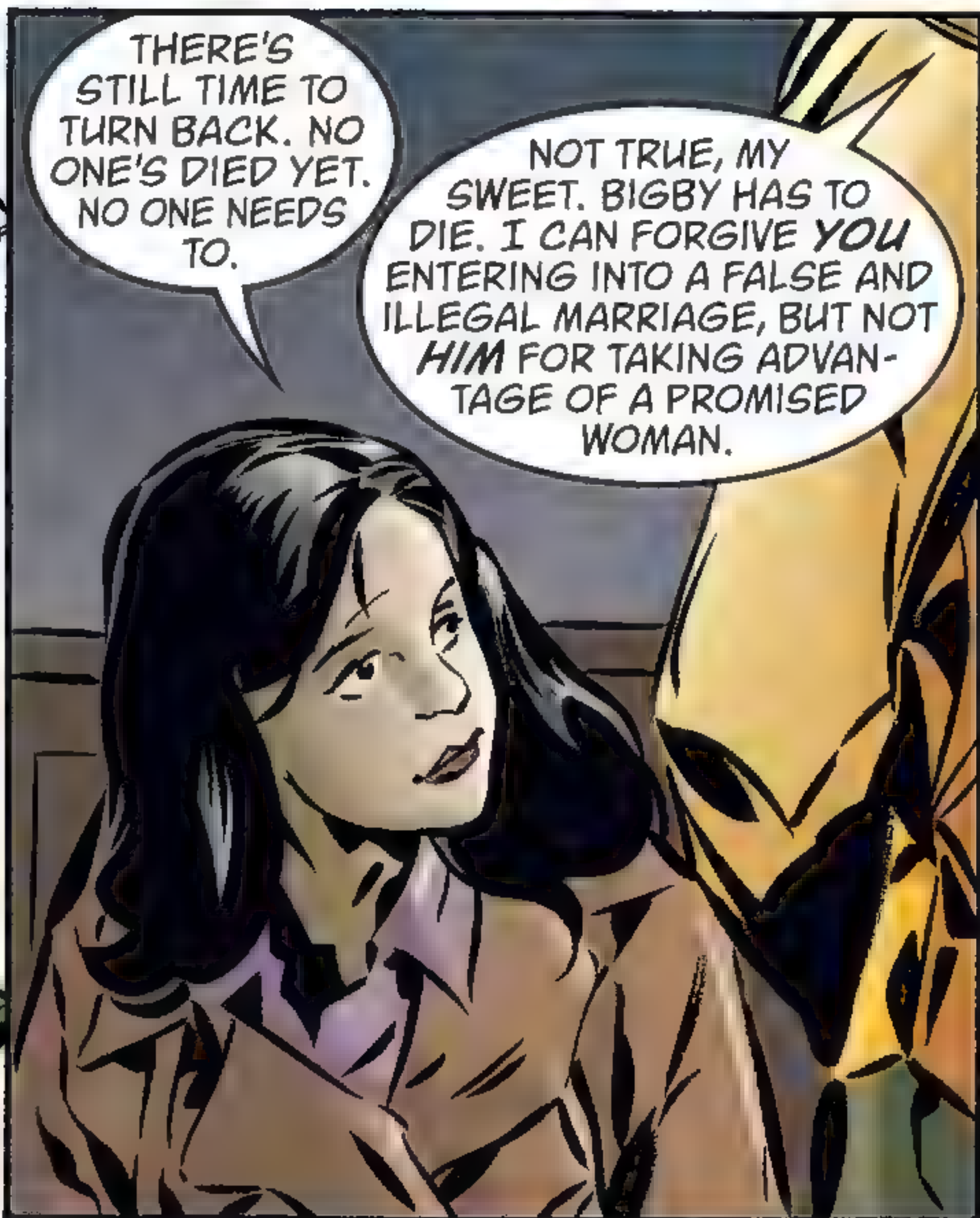
A SLATE
WIPED *CLEAN*.
YOU'RE
WELCOME.

PLEASE,
I *BEG* OF
YOU, LET ME
SPEAK.



WHO'S STOPPING YOU,
SNOWFLAKE? GO AHEAD. AIR
WHATEVER'S ON YOUR PRETTY
LITTLE MIND.

DESPITE THE WAY
YOU'VE ACTED TODAY, I
WANT TO TRY TO SAVE YOUR
LIFE BY TALKING YOU *OUT*
OF WHATEVER IT IS YOU
HAVE PLANNED.



THERE'S
STILL TIME TO
TURN BACK. NO
ONE'S DIED YET.
NO ONE NEEDS
TO.

NOT TRUE, MY
SWEET. BIGBY HAS TO
DIE. I CAN FORGIVE *YOU*
ENTERING INTO A FALSE AND
ILLEGAL MARRIAGE, BUT NOT
HIM FOR TAKING ADVAN-
TAGE OF A PROMISED
WOMAN.



SOONER
OR LATER, HE'LL
HEAR OF MY RETURN
AND COME RUNNING
TO YOUR SIDE, LIKE
THE LOYAL *DOG*
HE IS.

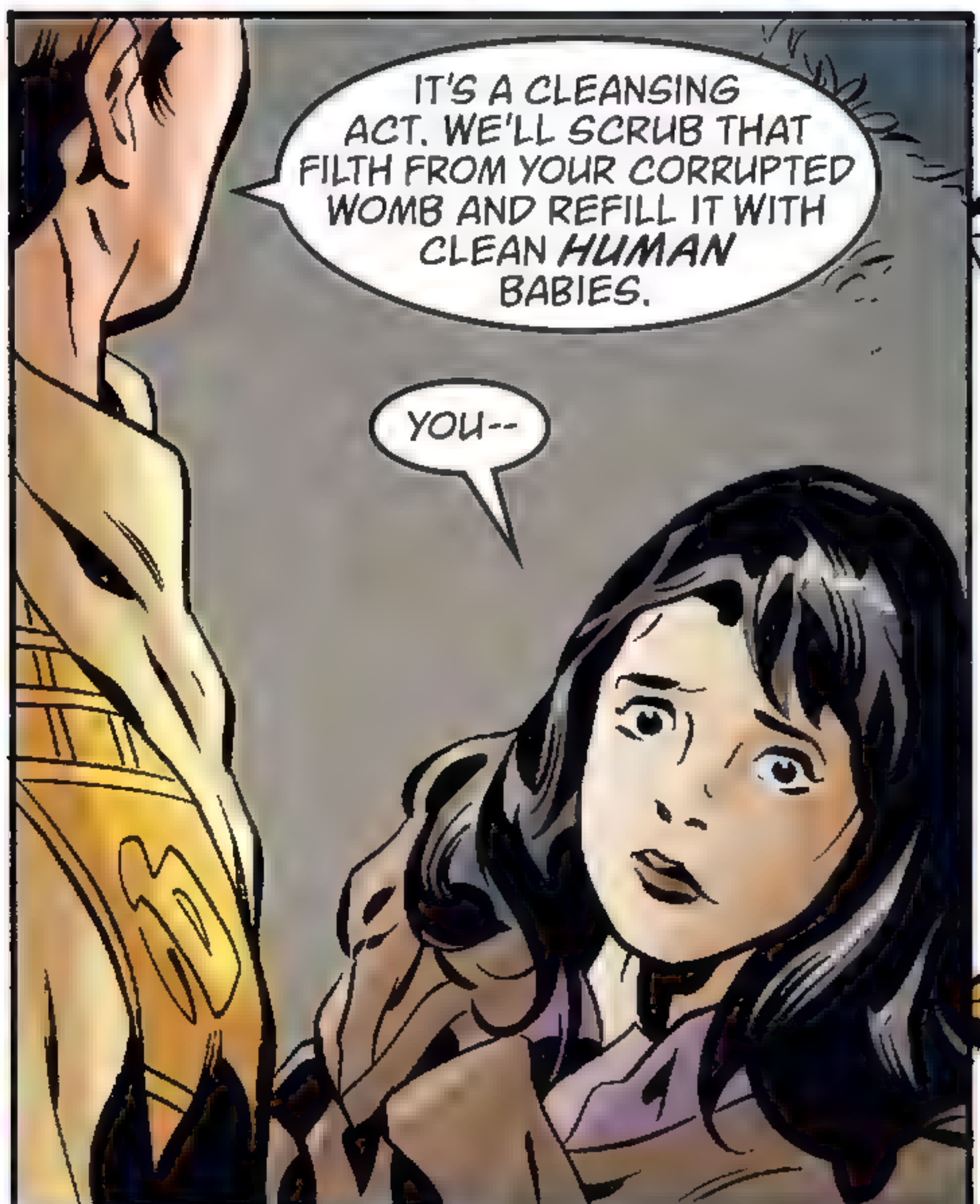
I'LL DISPATCH
HIM QUICKLY, AS A
FAVOR TO YOU.



AND OF COURSE YOUR SO-CALLED
CUBS WILL HAVE TO GO AS WELL. AS IS
ONLY PROPER IN A FAIR AND CIVILIZED
LAND, YOUR *ONLY* CHILDREN MUST
BE MY CHILDREN.



THE
HELL--?!



I hadn't seen the Kingdom of Haven by that point. It was still ruled back then by the janitor-turned-king I was named after.

HOW'YA DOING, OLD DUFFER?



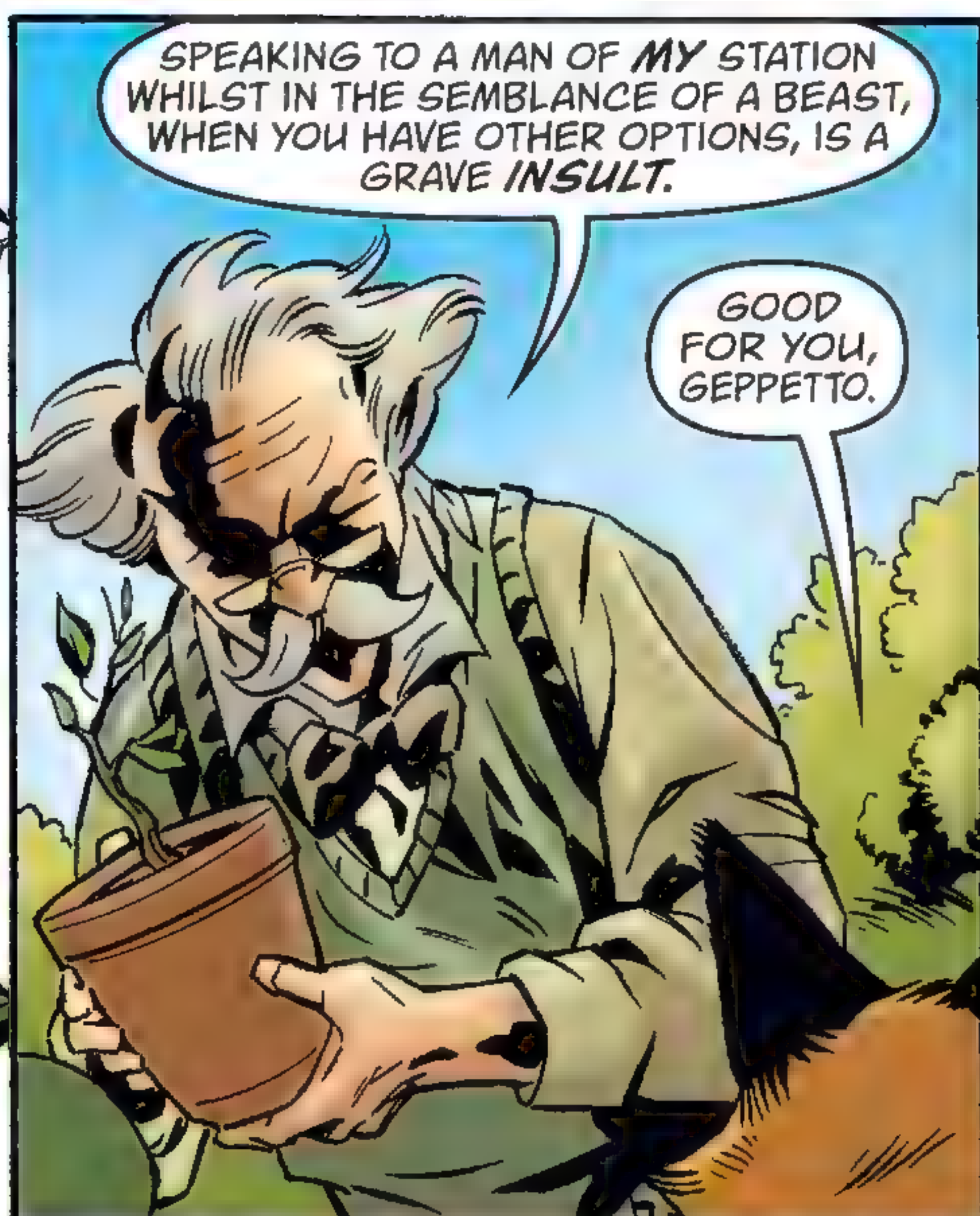
I'LL THANK YOU NOT TO TALK TO ME IN THAT GUISE.

REYNARD, ISN'T IT? I HAPPEN TO KNOW YOU'VE BECOME CAPABLE OF ASSUMING HUMAN FORM.



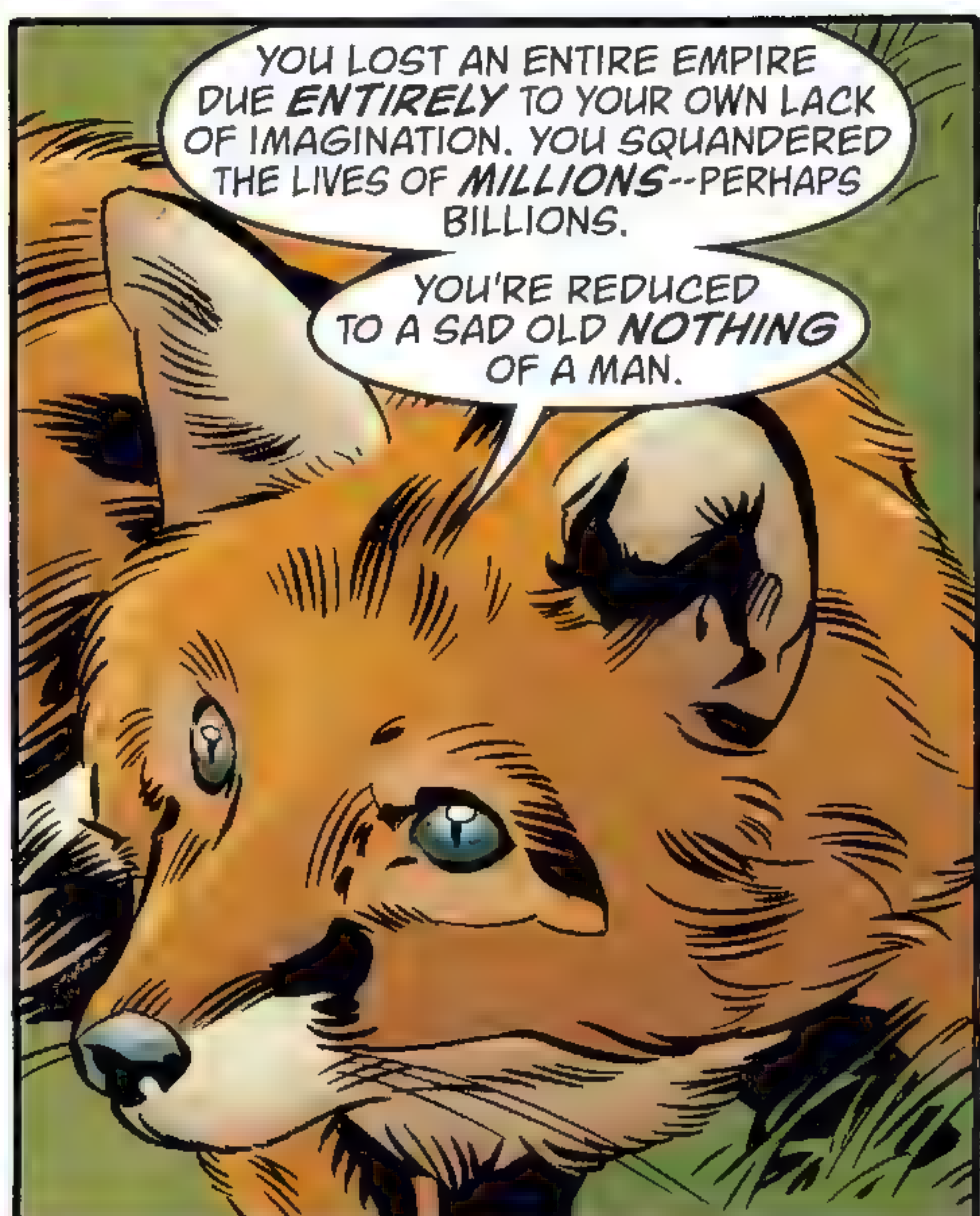
SPEAKING TO A MAN OF MY STATION WHILST IN THE SEMBLANCE OF A BEAST, WHEN YOU HAVE OTHER OPTIONS, IS A GRAVE INSULT.

GOOD FOR YOU, GEPPETTO.



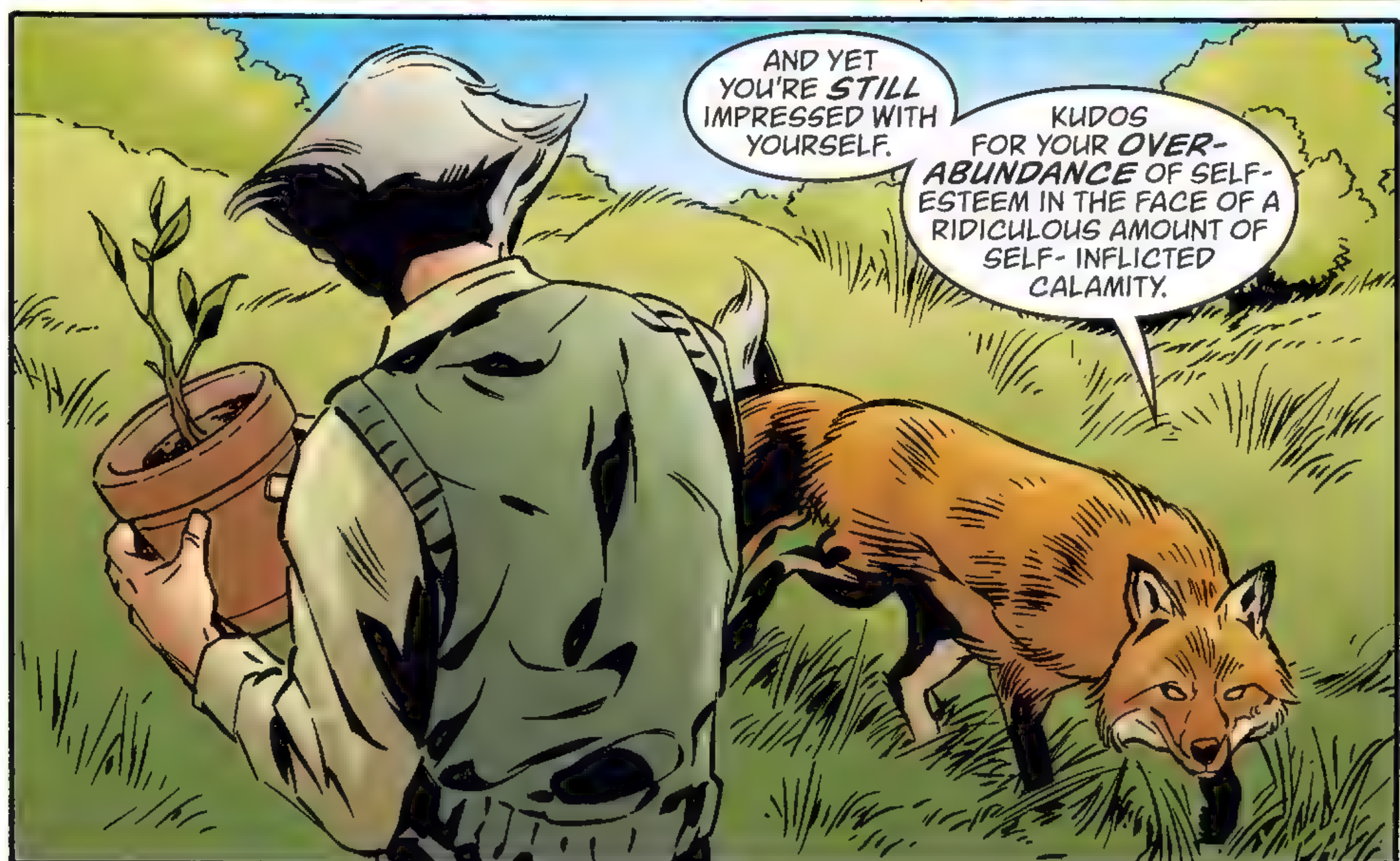
YOU LOST AN ENTIRE EMPIRE DUE ENTIRELY TO YOUR OWN LACK OF IMAGINATION. YOU SQUANDERED THE LIVES OF MILLIONS--PERHAPS BILLIONS.

YOU'RE REDUCED TO A SAD OLD NOTHING OF A MAN.



AND YET YOU'RE STILL IMPRESSED WITH YOURSELF.

KUDOS FOR YOUR OVER-ABUNDANCE OF SELF-ESTEEM IN THE FACE OF A RIDICULOUS AMOUNT OF SELF-INFLICTED CALAMITY.





DO YOU HAVE SOME **PURPOSE** IN TALKING TO ME, RASCAL? I'M A BUSY MAN.

I WAS JUST CURIOUS AS TO THE POTTED PLANT. YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING THAT THING AROUND LIKE IT WAS A FRAGILE **TREASURE** EVER SINCE YOU CAME BACK TO HAVEN.



I WAS WORRIED YOU MIGHT BE GOING JUST A **WEE** BIT 'ROUND THE BEND.

YOU'VE MADE YOUR **INSIPID** OBSERVATION, SANS AN ACTUAL QUESTION. NOW I'LL THANK YOU TO MOVE ALONG.



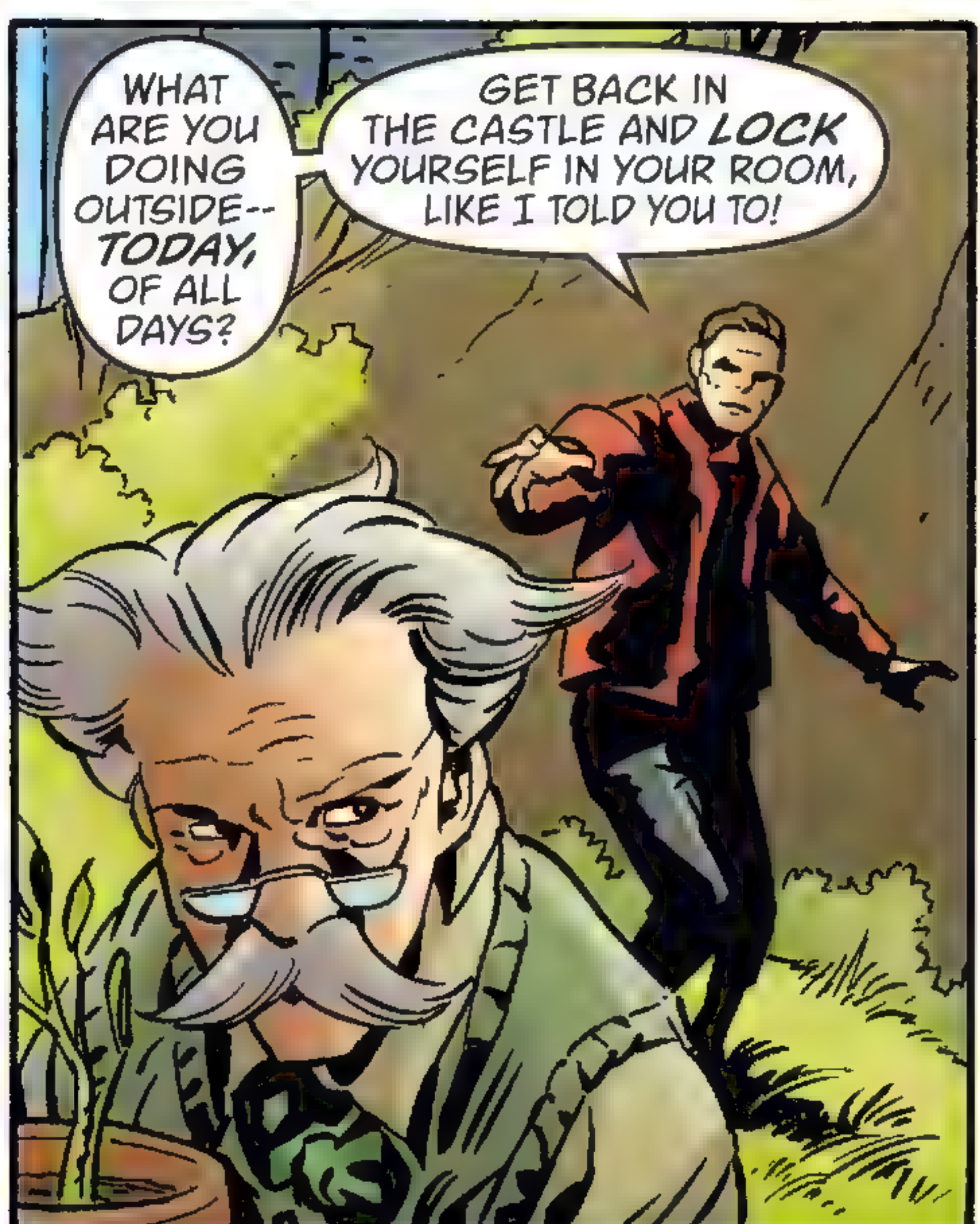
NARCISSIST.

CUR.



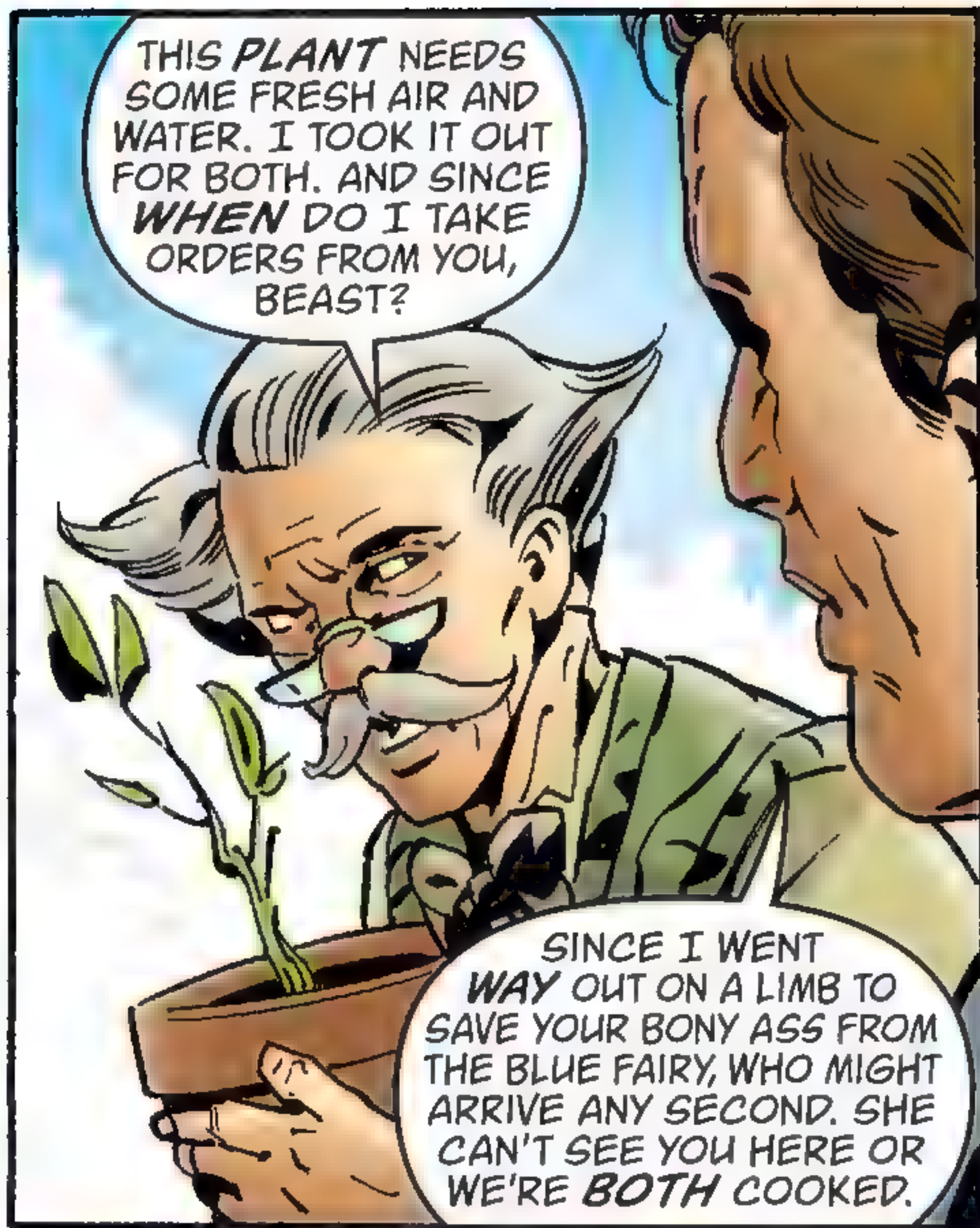
HEY! **GEPPETTO!**

HOLD IT RIGHT **THERE!** DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE-- **TODAY,** OF ALL DAYS?

GET BACK IN THE CASTLE AND **LOCK** YOURSELF IN YOUR ROOM, LIKE I TOLD YOU TO!



THIS *PLANT* NEEDS SOME FRESH AIR AND WATER. I TOOK IT OUT FOR BOTH. AND SINCE *WHEN* DO I TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU, BEAST?

SINCE I WENT WAY OUT ON A LIMB TO SAVE YOUR BONY ASS FROM THE BLUE FAIRY, WHO MIGHT ARRIVE ANY SECOND. SHE CAN'T SEE YOU HERE OR WE'RE *BOTH* COOKED.



ALSO SINCE I'M SHERIFF OF THE WHOLE DAMNED KINGDOM NOW.

YOU?

ME. OFFICIALLY APPOINTED BY HIS HIGHNESS, AMBROSE THE FIRST, LAST WEEK.



IS THAT FLY-EATING MORON *MORE* DAFT THAN EVEN I SUSPECTED?

HEY, WATCH IT, PAL. YOU JUST SPOKE TREASON.



IT WOULD BE ALL *KINDS* OF POETIC JUSTICE IF YOU GOT YOUR HEAD LOPPED OFF FOR THE SAME CRIME YOU NO DOUBT EXECUTED SO MANY FOR, BACK IN *YOUR* HEYDAY.

I ALSO PUNISHED *THUGS* WHO OVERSTEPPED THEIR AUTHORITY. TAKE THAT AS A CAUTIONARY TALE.



NO, *YOU* TAKE IT. TAKE YOURSELF AND YOUR VANITY *AND* YOUR LITTLE PET PLANT BACK INTO THE CASTLE, RIGHT *NOW*.



OR I'LL HAVE A COUPLE OF *MY* THUGS COME OUT HERE AND DO UNTO YOU WITH CHAINS AND DRAGGING AND AN INSPIRED *FIST* OR TWO WHAT YOU CAN'T SEEM TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO WITH YOUR OWN TWO *LEGS*.



SO, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE?



ARE YOU GOING TO **RAPE** ME? IF THAT'S YOUR NOTION, THEN LET ME TRY ONE LAST TIME TO TALK YOU OUT OF IT.

BY DOING SO, YOU'D COMMIT SUICIDE, JUST AS SURELY AS IF YOU DRAGGED A **KNIFE** ACROSS YOUR THROAT.

MY HUSBAND WILL--



FLY TO YOUR SIDE AND AVENGE YOU BY TEARING ME LIMB FROM LIMB. YES, I **KNOW** HE'S A SAVAGE MONSTER. I'VE HEARD EVERY SCARY STORY.



BUT DON'T COUNT ME OUT. I'VE DISPATCHED **BIGGER** THAN HIM IN MY TIME. AND I ALWAYS HAVE A TRICK OR TWO UP MY SLEEVE.

THAT ISN'T WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY.



I'M SORRY, MY LITTLE FOREST PRINCESS. I INTERRUPTED YOU. HOW BOORISH OF ME. DO PLEASE CONTINUE.

WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY IS, MY HUSBAND WILL BE CROSS WITH ME WHEN HE FINDS OUT I DIDN'T LEAVE ANYTHING **ALIVE** ON WHICH TO SATE **HIS** FURY.



TOUCH ME AGAIN AND YOU'VE SIGNED YOUR OWN DEATH WARRANT, BECAUSE I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF, JUST AS SURELY AS NIGHT FOLLOWS DAY.

BELIEVE THAT AS YOU'VE NEVER BELIEVED ANYTHING ELSE.



PRETTY SPEECH.



YOU NEEDN'T WORRY, THOUGH. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TAKING MY RIGHTS WITH YOU, UNTIL YOU ASK ME TO--WHICH YOU WILL.

TRUST ME ON THAT MUCH. YOU'LL COME PANTING FOR ME SOONER THAN YOU THINK.



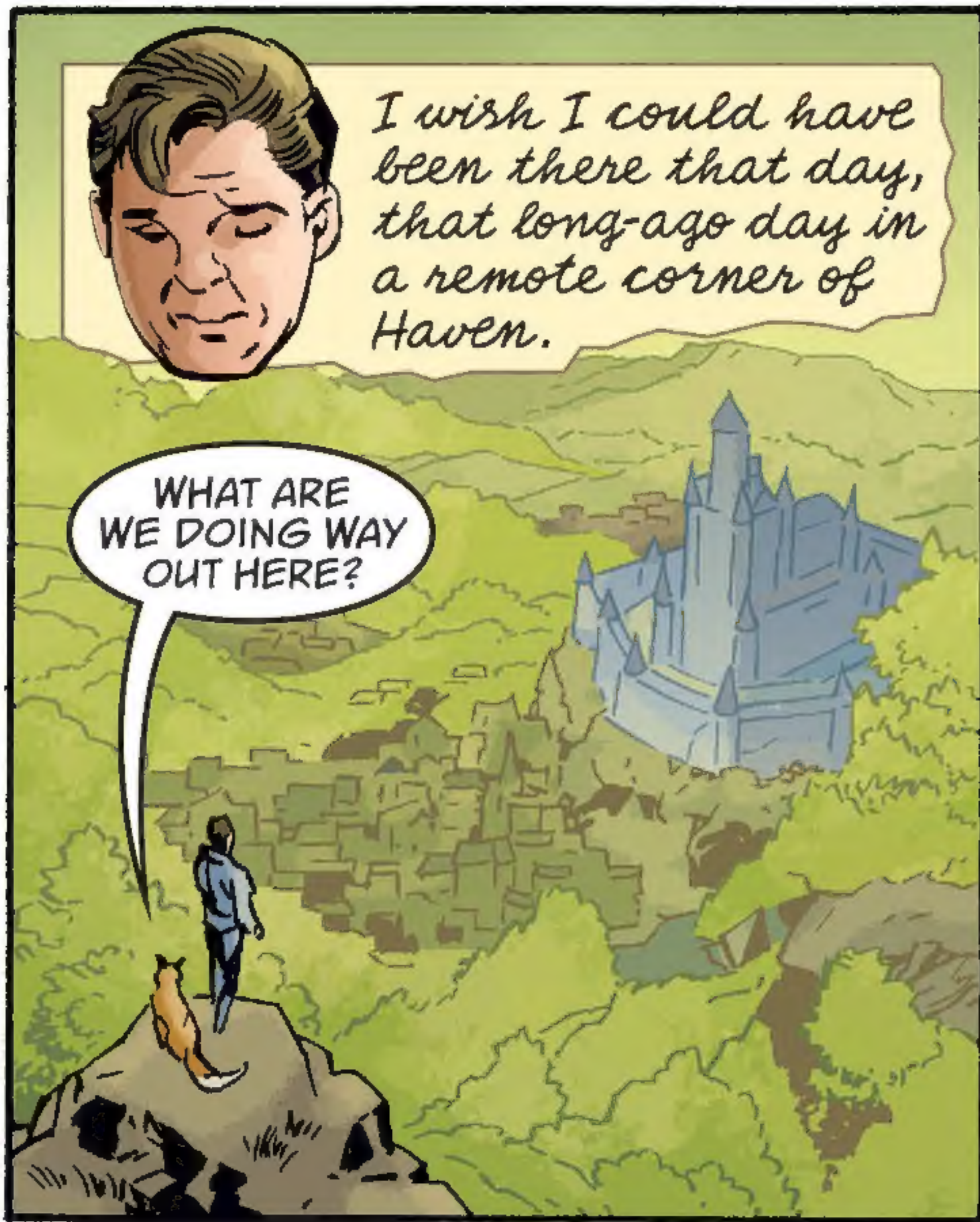
BEFORE ANY OF THAT, YOU'LL HAVE TO WASH THE DOG'S STINK OFF YOU.

THOROUGHLY.



I WON'T RISK GETTING WHATEVER FLEAS AND OTHER PESTILENCES HE'S INFESTED YOU WITH.

YOU'LL FIND A VERY MODERN SHOWER IN THE BATHING ROOM. GET TO IT.



I wish I could have been there that day, that long-ago day in a remote corner of Haven.

WHAT ARE WE DOING WAY OUT HERE?



That lovely and terrible day when my fate flew in on powdered blue wings.

I'M DOING A JOB. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, REYNARD.

I CAME TO WATCH THE SHOW. THIS IS BLUE FAIRY DAY, RIGHT?

POSSIBLY.



I'M CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT YOU'LL DO. HOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF BEING TAKEN AWAY AS A SLAVE FOR, HOW MANY CENTURIES IS IT?

A LOT.

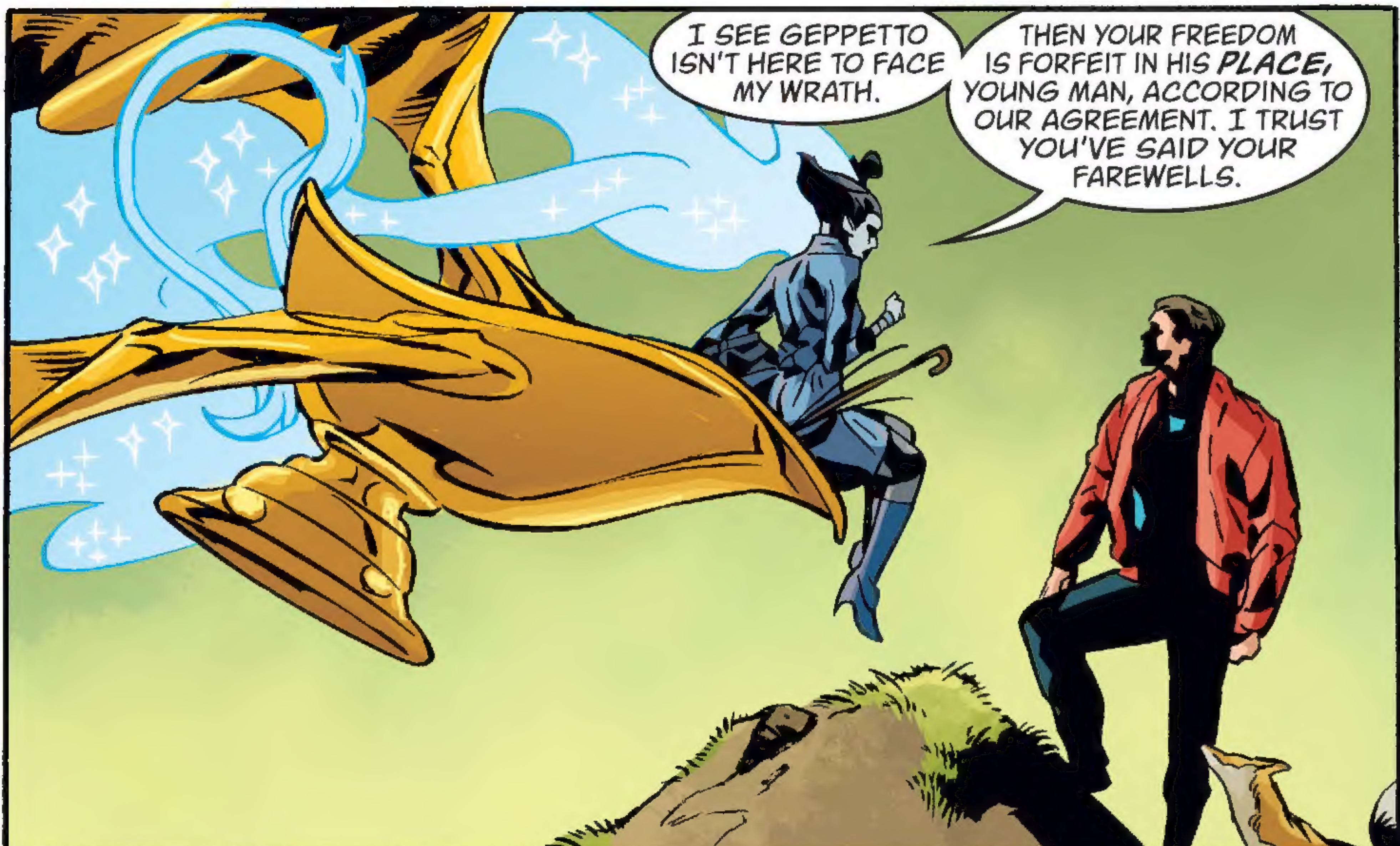


YEAH, AND IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING REALLY CLEVER UP YOUR SLEEVE, I FIGURE SOMEONE SHOULD SEE THE ENSLAVEMENT TAKE PLACE AND BE ABLE TO TELL THE TALE.

HOW GENEROUS OF YOU.



HERE SHE COMES.



I SEE GEPPETTO ISN'T HERE TO FACE MY WRATH.

THEN YOUR FREEDOM IS FORFEIT IN HIS PLACE, YOUNG MAN, ACCORDING TO OUR AGREEMENT. I TRUST YOU'VE SAID YOUR FAREWELLS.



NOPE. NO FAREWELLS, MA'AM.

NO NEED TO, SINCE I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

YOU SEE, I HAVE FULFILLED THE BARGAIN. GEPPETTO ACTUALLY IS HERE, BY ALL LEGAL DEFINITIONS.



OH SO? UNDER THE SUZERAINITY OF WHAT LAWS? I HAVE NO TRUCK WITH THE LAWS OF MAN IN ANY WORLD.

HOW FORTUNATE THEN THAT IT'S NOT THE LAWS OF MAN, BUT FAIRY LAW OF WHICH I SPEAK.



SPECIFICALLY THE LAWS GOVERNING COURTSHIP AND THE UNION OF HIGH PERSONAGES.

GEPPETTO ISN'T HERE BECAUSE HE CAN'T BE. AS THE HOPEFUL SUITOR, IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF GAUCHERIE FOR HIM TO PLEAD HIS OWN CASE.



THEREFORE I STAND HERE AS HIS SWORN REPRESENTATIVE, IN HIS PLACE, AS IF HE WERE IN FACT HERE IN PERSON.

SO, READY TO TALK MARRIAGE, MADAM?

?



NATHAN